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ABSTRACT

This how-to guide for teachers suggests ways to help children with attention deficit disorders (ADD) in the general classroom, by means of specific instructional practices to be used as part of an instructional program based on classroom accommodations, behavior management, and individualized academic instruction. Basic steps in developing an effective educational program for the ADD student are outlined, including evaluating the child's individual needs, selecting appropriate instructional practices, and integrating appropriate practices within an individualized program. The recommended instructional strategies are grouped into the following categories: general instructional principles, individualized instructional practices, language arts and reading comprehension, phonics and grammar, handwriting, mathematics, solving word problems, special materials, organizational skills, study skills, behavior management, verbal reinforcement, counseling, and classroom accommodations. (DB)

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101 WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH ADD LEARN: Tips from Successful Teachers

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101 WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH ADD LEARN: Tips from Successful Teachers

Research shows there are an estimated 3 to 5 percent of school-age children with Attention Deficit Disorder. In response to the needs expressed by teachers for teaching strategies that work with these children, the U.S. Department of Education has supported research in classrooms to determine successful teaching techniques employed by elementary school teachers to keep children focused and on task. The following tips, for experienced and inexperienced elementary school teachers alike, are tried and true methods for reaching children with ADD.

Children with ADD typically have problems with inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity. They often have difficulty paying attention in class and seem to shift aimlessly from one unfinished activity to another. These children generally appear restless, fidgeting constantly in their seats, playing with pencils or other objects, or disturbing nearby students. Many children with ADD also have difficulty following their teachers' instructions or forming friendships with other children in the class.

Like other children with disabilities, children with ADD learn best when their teachers understand their special needs and individualize their educational program to meet these needs.

101 Ways To Help Children with ADD Learn is a how-to guide with instructional practices you can use to help children with ADD in your class. The practices themselves should be part of an educational program based around three key components-classroom accommodations, behavior management, and individualized academic instruction.

To make this book as valuable a resource as possible, you should consider these steps in developing an effective educational program for your students with ADD:

- **Evaluate the Child's Individual Needs.** Assess the unique educational needs of a child with ADD in your class. Working with a multi-disciplinary team, consider both academic and behavioral needs, using formal diagnostic assessments and informal classroom observations.

- **Select Appropriate Instructional Practices.** Determine which instructional practices will meet the academic and behavioral needs you have identified for the child. Select practices that fit the content, are age appropriate, and gain the cooperation of the child.

- **Integrate Appropriate Practices Within an Individualized Program.** Combine the practices you have selected into an individualized educational program. Plan how to integrate the educational activities provided to other children in your class with those selected for the child with ADD.

Because no two children with ADD are alike, no single educational program, practice, or setting will be best for all children.

ADD: What Teachers Should Know, which is also in the information kit, describes ways in which effective teachers have individualized educational programs for children with ADD in their classes. Illustrated with real-life stories of effective educational practices for 12 children with ADD, these ideas can guide you in determining how best to design and implement an effective program for children with ADD in your class.

Academic Instruction

Children with ADD often have difficulty learning and achieving academically in school. Effective teachers constantly monitor the child and adapt and individualize academic instruction.

General Instructional Principles

Effective teachers help prepare their students to learn when they introduce, conduct, and conclude each academic lesson. These principles of effective instruction, which reflect what we know about how to educate all children in the class, will especially help a child with ADD to stay focused on his assigned tasks as he transitions from one lesson to another throughout the school day.

Students with ADD benefit from clear statements about their teacher's expectations at the beginning of the lesson. Consider these strategies.

1. **Review Previous Lessons.** Review information about previous lesson on this topic. For example, remind children that yesterday's lesson focused on learning how to regroup in subtraction. Review several problems before describing the current lesson.

2. **Set Learning Expectations.** State what students are expected to learn during the lesson. For example, explain to students that a language arts lesson will involve reading a story about Paul Bunyan and identifying new vocabulary words in the story.

3. **Set Behavioral Expectations.** Describe how students are expected to behave during the lesson. For example, tell children that they may talk quietly to their neighbors as they work on a seatwork assignment or raise their hands to get your attention.

4. **State Needed Materials.** Identify all materials that the child will need during the lesson. For example, specify that children need their journals and pencils for journal writing or their crayons, scissors, and colored paper for an art project; rather than leaving children to figure out on their own the materials required for a lesson.

5. **Explain Additional Resources.** Tell students how to obtain help in mastering the lesson. For example, remind the children to refer to a particular page in the text book to get help in completing a worksheet.

When conducting an academic lesson, effective teachers use some of the following strategies.

6. **Use Audio-visual Materials.** Use a variety of audio-visual materials to present academic lessons. For example, use an overhead projector to demonstrate how to solve an addition problem requiring regrouping. The students can work on the problem at their desks, while you manipulate counters on the projector screen

7. **Check Student Performance.** Question individual students about their mastery of the lesson. For example, you can ask a student doing seatwork to demonstrate how he or she arrived at the answer to a problem or ask individual students to state, in their own words, how the main character felt at the end of the story.

8. **Ask Probing Questions.** Probe for the correct answer before calling on another student and allow children sufficient time to work out the answer to a question. Count at least 15 seconds before giving the answer and ask follow-up questions that give the child an opportunity to demonstrate what he or she knows.

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9. **Perform On-going Student Evaluation.** Identify students who need additional assistance. Watch for signs of lack of comprehension, such as day-dreaming or visual or verbal indications of frustration. Provide these children with extra explanation or ask another student to serve as a peer tutor for the lesson.

10. **Help Students Self-Correct Their Own Mistakes.** Describe how students can identify and correct their own mistakes. For example, remind students that they should check their calculations in mathematics problems and reiterate how they can do that; remind students of particularly difficult spelling rules and how students can watch out for "easy-to-make" errors.

11. **Focus Dawdling Students.** Remind students who dawdle to keep working and redirect these students to focus on their assigned task. For example, you can provide follow-up directions or assign learning partners. These practices can be directed at individual children or at the entire class.

12. **Lower Noise Level.** Monitor the noise level in the classroom and provide corrective feedback, as needed. If the noise level exceeds the level appropriate for the type of lesson, remind all students -- or individual students -- about the behavior rules stated at the beginning of the lesson.

Students with ADD often have difficulty refocusing their attention as they end one academic lesson and move on to the next lesson. Effective teachers help their students prepare for these transitions when concluding a lesson.

13. **Provide Advance Warnings.** Provide ad-vance warning that a lesson is about to end. Announce five or ten minutes prior to the end of the lesson (particularly for seatwork and group projects) how much time remains. You may also want to tell students at the beginning of the lesson how much time they will have to complete it.

14. **Check Assignments.** Check completed assignments for at least some students. Review with some students what they have learned during the lessons, to get a sense of how ready the class was for the lesson and how to plan the next lesson.

15. **Preview the Next Lesson.** Instruct students how to begin preparing for the next lesson. For example, inform children that they need to put away their textbooks and come to the front of the room for a large group spelling lesson.

Individualized Instructional Practices

Effective teachers individualize their instructional practices based on the needs of their students in different academic subjects. Students have different ways of getting information, not all of which involve traditional reading and listening. Individualized lessons in language arts, mathematics, and organizational skills benefit not only children with ADD, but also other children who have diverse learning needs.

Language Arts
Reading Comprehension

To help children with ADD who are poor readers improve their reading comprehension skills, try the following instructional practices:

16. **Silent Reading Time.** Establish a fixed time each day for silent reading (e.g., DEAR: Drop Everything And Read).

17. **Follow-Along Reading.** Ask the child to read a story silently while listening to other students or the teacher read the story out loud to the entire class.

18. **Partner Reading Activities.** Pair the child with ADD with another student

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partner who is a strong reader. The partners take turns reading orally and listening to each other.

19. **Storyboards.** Ask the child to make storyboards that illustrate the sequence of main events in a story.

20. **Storytelling.** Schedule "storytelling" sessions where the child can retell a story he or she has read recently.

21. **Play-acting.** Schedule "play-acting" sessions where the child can role play different characters in a favorite story.

22. **Word Bank.** Keep a word bank or dictionary of new or "hard-to-read" sight vocabulary words.

23. **Board Games for Reading Comprehension.** Play board games that provide practice with target reading comprehension skills or sight vocabulary words.

24. **Computer Games for Reading Comprehension.** Schedule computer time for the child to have "drill-and-practice" with sight vocabulary words.

Phonics and Grammar

To help children with ADD master phonics and grammar rules, the following are effective:

25. **Mnemonics for Phonics and Grammar.** Teach the child mnemonics that provide reminders about hard-to-learn grammatical rules such as (a) correct punctuation, (b) irregular verb tenses, and (c) correct capitalization.

26. **Word Families.** Teach the child to recognize and read word families that illustrate particular phonetic concepts (e.g., "ph" sounds).

27. **"Everyday" Examples of Grammar Rules.** Take advantage of naturally occurring events to teach grammar rules skills in the context of everyday life. For example, ask a boy and a girl who are reading a story together questions about the proper use of male and female pronouns.

28. **Board Games for Phonics and Grammar.** Play board games that practice phonetically irregular words.

29. **Computer Games for Phonics and Grammar.** Use a computer to provide opportunities to have "drill-and-practice" with phonics or grammar lessons.

30. **Structured Programs for Phonics and Grammar.** Teach phonics and grammar skills through a structured program such as Sandy Rief's *Simply Phonics* program.

In composing stories or other writing assignments, children with ADD benefit from the following practices:

31. **Standards for Writing Assignments.** Identify and teach the child classroom-wide standards for acceptable written work.

32. **Recognizing Parts of a Story.** Teach the student how to describe the major parts of a story (e.g., plot, main characters, setting, conflict, and resolution).

33. **Post Office.** Establish a "post office" in the classroom and provide students with opportunities to write, mail, and receive letters to and from their classmates and teacher.

34. **Visualizing Compositions.** Ask the child to close his or her eyes and visualize a paragraph that the teacher reads aloud. Another variation of this technique is to ask a student to describe a recent event while the other students have their eyes closed.

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35. **Proofreading Compositions.** Require that the child proofread his or her work before turning in written assignments. Provide the child with a list of items to check when proofreading his or her own work.

To help children with ADD who are poor spellers master their spelling lessons, the following have been found to be helpful:

36. **Teaching Frequently** Used Spelling Words. Assign spelling words that the child routinely uses in his or her speech each day.

37. **Creating a Dictionary of Misspelled Words.** Ask the child to keep a personal dictionary of frequently misspelled words.

38. **Using Partner Spelling Activities.** Pair the child with another student. Ask the partners to quiz each other about how to spell new words. Encourage both students to guess the correct spelling.

39. **Working with Manipulatives.** Use cut out letters or other manipulatives to spell out hard-to-learn words.

40. **Using Color-Coded Letters.** Color code different letters in "hard-to-spell" words (e.g., receipt).

41. **Using Movement Activities.** Combine movement activities with spelling lessons (e.g., jump rope while spelling words out loud).

42. **Using "Everyday" Examples of Hard-to-Spell Words.** Take advantage of naturally occurring events to teach difficult spelling words in context. For example, ask a child eating a cheese sandwich to spell "sandwich."

Handwriting

Students with ADD who have difficulty with manuscript or cursive writing benefit from these instructional practices.

43. **Individual Chalkboards.** Ask the child to practice copying and erasing the target words on a small, individual chalkboard. Two children can be paired to practice their target words together.

44. **Quiet Places for Handwriting.** Provide the child with a special "quiet place" (e.g., on a table outside the classroom) to complete his or her handwriting assignments.

45. **Spacing Words on a Page.** Teach the child to use his or her finger to measure how much space to leave between each word in a written assignment.

46. **Special Writing Paper.** Ask the child to use special paper with vertical lines to learn to space letters and words on a page.

47. **Tape Recorders.** Ask the student to dictate writing assignments into a tape recorder.

48. **Dictating Writing Assignments.** Have the teacher or another student write down a story told by a child with ADD.

49. **Structured Programs for Handwriting.** Teach handwriting skills through a structured program such as Jan Olson's *Handwriting Without Tears* program.

Mathematics

There are several individualized instructional practices that can help children with ADD improve their basic computation skills. The following are just a few:

50. **Recognizing Patterns in Mathematics.** Teach the student to recognize patterns when adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing whole numbers.

51. **Partner Mathematics Activities.** Pair a child with ADD with another student and provide opportunities for the partners to quiz each other about basic computation skills.

52. **Mnemonics for Basic Computation.** Teach the child mnemonics that describe basic steps in computing whole numbers. For example, "Don't Miss Susie's Boat" can be used to help the student recall the basic steps in long division (i.e., divide, multiply, subtract, and bring down).

53. **"Real Life" Examples of Money Skills.** Provide the child with naturally occurring, "real life" opportunities to practice target money skills. For example, ask the child to calculate his or her change when paying for lunch in the school cafeteria.

54. **Color Coding Arithmetic Symbols.** Color code basic arithmetic symbols such as +, -, and = to provide visual cues for children when they are computing whole numbers.

55. **Using Calculators To Check Basic Computation.** Ask the child to use a calculator to check his addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division.

56. **Board Games for Basic Computation.** Ask the child to play board games to practice adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing whole numbers.

57. **Computer Games for Basic Computation.** Schedule computer time for the child for "drill-and-practice" with basic computation facts.

58. **Structured Programs for Basic Computation.** Teach basic computation skills through a structured program such as Innovative Learning Concepts' *Touch Math* program.

Solving Word Problems

To help children with ADD improve their skill in solving word problems in mathematics, try the following.

59. **Rereading the Problem.** Teach the child to read a word problem *two times* before beginning to compute the answer.

60. **Using Clue Words.** Teach the child "clue words" that identify which operation to use when solving word problems. For example, words such as "sum," "total," or "all together" may indicate an addition operation.

61. **Mnemonics for Word Problems.** Teach students mnemonics that help remind them of basic questions to ask in solving word problems (e.g., what is the question asked in the problem, what information do you have to figure out the answer, and what operation should you use to compute the answer).

62. **"Real Life" Examples of Word problems.** Ask the student to create and solve word problems that provide practice with specific target operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. These problems can be based on recent, "real life" events in the children's lives.

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63. **Using Calculators to Check Word Problems.** Ask the student to use a calculator to check his or her answers to assigned word problems.

Special Materials

Some children with ADD benefit from using special materials to help them complete their mathematics assignments.

64. **Number lines.** Provide a number line for the child to use when computing whole numbers.

65. **Manipulatives.** Use manipulatives to help students gain basic computation skills such as counting poker chips when adding single-digit numbers.

66. **Graph Paper.** Ask the child to use graph paper to help organize columns when adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing whole numbers.

Organizational Skills

Many students with ADD are easily distracted and have difficulty focusing their attention on assigned tasks. However, there are several practices that can help children with ADD improve their organization of homework and other daily assignments.

67. **Assignment Notebook.** Provide the child with an assignment notebook to help organize homework and other seatwork.

68. **Color-Coded Folders.** Provide the child with color-coded folders to help organize assignments for different academic subjects (e.g., reading, mathematics, social science, and science).

69. **Homework Partners.** Assign the child a partner to help record homework and other seatwork in the proper folders and assignment notebook.

70. **Cleaning Out Desks and Book Bags.** Ask the child to periodically sort through and clean out his or her desk, book bag, and other special places where written assignments are stored.

Children with ADD who have difficulty finishing their assignments on time can also benefit from individualized instruction that helps them improve their time management skills.

71. **Using a Wristwatch.** Teach the child how to read and use a wristwatch to manage his or her time when completing assigned work.

72. **Using a Calendar.** Teach the child how to read and use a calendar to schedule his or her assignments.

73. **Practicing Sequencing Activities.** Provide the child with supervised opportunities to break down a long assignment into a sequence of short, interrelated activities.

74. **Creating a Daily Activity Schedule.** Tape a schedule of planned daily activities to the child's desk.

Study Skills

75. **Using Ven Diagrams.** Teach a child with ADD how to use ven diagrams to help illustrate and organize key concepts in reading, mathematics, or other academic subjects.

76. **Note-Taking Skills.** Teach a child with ADD how to take notes when organizing key academic concepts that he or she has learned with a program such as Anita Archer's *Skills for School Success.*

77. **Developing a Checklist of Frequent Mistakes.** Provide the child with a checklist of mistakes that he or she frequently

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makes in written assignments (e.g., punctuation or capitalization errors), mathematics (e.g., addition or subtraction errors), or other academic subjects. Teach the child how to use this list when proofreading his or her work at home and school.

78. **Using a Checklist of Homework Supplies.** Provide the child with a checklist that identifies categories of items needed for homework assignments (e.g., books, pencils, and homework assignment sheets).

79. **Preparing Uncluttered Workspace.** Teach a child with ADD how to prepare an uncluttered workspace to complete his assignments. For example, instruct the child to clear away unnecessary books or other materials *before* beginning a seatwork assignment.

80. **Monitoring Homework Assignments.** Keep track of how well your students with ADD complete their assigned homework. Discuss and resolve with them and their parents any problems in completing these assignments. For example, evaluate the difficulty of the assignments and how long the children spend on their homework each night.

Behavior Management

Children with ADD often are impulsive and hyperactive. Effective teachers use behavior management techniques to help these children learn how to control their behavior.

Verbal Reinforcement

Students with ADD benefit from frequent reinforcement of appropriate behavior and correction of inappropriate behavior. Verbal reinforcement takes on the form of praise and reprimands. In addition, it is sometimes helpful to selectively ignore inappropriate behavior.

81. **Verbal Praise.** Simple phrases such as "good job" encourage a child to act appropriately. Praise children frequently, and look for a behavior to praise before -- not after -- a child is off task.

82. **Verbal Reprimands.** Do not hesitate to request that a child change his or her behavior. The most effective reprimands are brief and directed at the child's behavior -- not at the child.

83. **Selective Ignoring of Inappropriate Behavior.** Carefully evaluate whether to intervene when a child misbehaves. In some instances, it is helpful to ignore the child's inappropriate behavior, particularly if a child is misbehaving to get your attention.

Behavioral Management

Effective teachers also use behavioral prompts with their students with ADD, as well as with other students in the class. These prompts help remind students about your expectations for their learning and behavior in the classroom.

84. **Visual Cues.** Establish simple, non-intrusive visual cues to remind the child to remain on task. For example, you can point at the child while looking him or her in the eye, or hold out your hand, palm down, near the child.

85. **Proximity Control.** When talking to a child, move to where the child is standing or sitting. Your physical proximity to the child will help the child to focus and pay attention to what you are saying.

Counseling

In some instances, children with ADD need counseling to learn how to manage their own behavior.

86. Classroom Interviews. Discuss how to res lve social conflicts with classroom interviews. Conduct impromptu counseling sessions with one student or a small group of students in the classroom where the conflict arises. In this setting, ask two children who are arguing about a game to discuss how to settle their differences. Encourage the children to resolve their problem by talking to each other, while you quietly monitor their interactions during the interview.

87. Social Skills Classes. Teach children with ADD appropriate social skills using a structured pull-out class. For example, you can ask the children to role play and nodel different solutions to common social problems. It is critical to provide for the generalization of these skills, including structured opportunities for the children to use the social skills they learn.

For some children with ADD, behavioral contracts, tangible rewards, or token economy systems are helpful in teaching them how to manage their own behavior. Because students' individual needs are different, it is important for teachers to evaluate whether these practices are appropriate for their classrooms.

88. Behavioral Contract. Identify specific academic or behavioral goals for the child with ADD. Work together with the child to cooperatively identify appropriate goals such as completing homework assignments on time and obeying safety rules on the school playground. Take the time to ensure that the child agrees that his or her goals are important to master.

89. Tangible Rewards. Use tangible rewards to reinforce appropriate behavior. These rewards can include (a) stickers such as "happy faces" or sports team emblems or (b) privileges, such as extra time on the computer or lunch with the teacher. In some cases, you may be able to enlist the support of parents in rewarding the children at home.

90. Token Economy System. Use token economy systems to motivate a child to achieve a goal identified in a behavioral contract. For example, a child can earn points for each homework assignment completed on time. In some cases, students also lose points for each homework assignment not completed on time. After earning a specified number of points, the student receives a tangible reward such as extra time on a computer or a "free period" on Friday afternoon.

Classroom Accommodations

Many children with ADD benefit from accommodations that reduce distractions in the classroom environment. These accommodations, which include modifications within both the physical environment and learning environment of the classroom, help some children with ADD stay on task and learn.

Accommodations of the physical environment include determining where a child with ADD will sit in the classroom. There are two main types of special seat assignments.

91. Seat Near the Teacher. Assign a child a seat near your desk or the front of the room. This seat assignment provides opportunities for you to monitor and reinforce the child's on-task behavior.

92. Seat Near a Student Role Model. Assign a child a seat near a student role model. This seat arrangement provides

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opportunities for children to work cooperatively and learn from their peers in the class.

Effective teachers also use different environmental prompts to make accommodations within the physical environment of the classroom.

93. Hand Gestures. Use hand signals to communicate privately with a child with ADD. For example, ask the child to raise his or her hand every time you ask a question. A closed fist can signal that the child knows the answer; an open palm can signal that he or she does not know the answer. You would call on the child to answer only when he or she makes a fist.

94. Egg Timers. Note for the children the time at which the lesson is starting and the time at which it will conclude. Set a timer to indicate to children how much time remains in the lesson and place it at the front of the classroom; the children can check the timer to see how much time remains. Interim prompts can be used as well. For instance, children can monitor their own progress during a 30-minute lesson if the timer is set for 10 minutes three times.

95. Classroom Lights. Turning the classroom lights "on and off" prompts children that the noise level in the room is too high and they should be quiet. This practice can also be used to signal that it is time to begin preparing for the next lesson.

96. Music. Play music on a tape recorder or chords on a piano to prompt children that they are too noisy. In addition, playing different types of music on a tape recorder communicates to children what level of activity is appropriate for a particular lesson. For example, play quiet classical music for quiet seat activities and jazz for active group activities.

Effective teachers make accommodations in the learning environment by guiding children with ADD with follow-up directions.

97. Follow-Up Oral Directions. After giving directions to the class as a whole, provide additional, oral directions for a child with ADD. For example, ask the child if he or she understood the directions, and repeat the directions together.

98. Follow-up Written Directions. Provide follow-up directions in writing. For example, write the page number for an assignment on the blackboard. You can remind the child to look at the blackboard if he or she forgets the assignment.

Effective teachers also use special instructional tools to modify the classroom learning environment and accommodate the special needs of their students with ADD.

99. Highlighting Key Words. Highlight key words in the instructions on worksheets to help the child with ADD focus on the directions. You can prepare the worksheet before the lesson begins or underline key words as you and the child read the directions together.

100. Using Pointers. Teach the child to use a pointer to help visually track written words on a page. For example, provide the child with a bookmark to help him or her follow along when students are taking turns reading aloud.

101. Adapting Worksheets. Teach a child how to adapt instructional worksheets. For example, help a child fold his or her reading worksheet to reveal only one question at a time. The child can also use a blank piece of paper to cover the other questions on the page.

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